

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MADRID 04492 01 OF 02 131629Z

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EURE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00

INRE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 OMB-01

EB-07 TRSE-00 COME-00 /060 W

-----131646Z 050870 /43

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FM AMEMBASSY MADRID

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 616

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY PARIS

USMISSION NATO

AMEMBASSY RONE

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 MADRID 4492

USEEC

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, SP

SUBJECT: CAMPAIGN'S END

1. AS THE CAMPAIGN CLOSES, SOME GENERAL OBSERVATIONS ABOUT SPAIN'S FIRST CELEBRATION OF DEMOCRATIC RITES IN FORTY YEARS ARE IN ORDER, EVEN THOUGH THERE IS NO SURETY AS TO THE SIZE OF SUAREZ'S PLURALITY AND, HENCE, THE OUTLOOK FOR POST-ELECTORAL COALITIONS (SEPTELS).

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PAGE 02 MADRID 04492 01 OF 02 131629Z

2. THE FACT OF THE ELECTIONS THEMSELVES AND THE PEACEFUL ATMOSPHERE IN WHICH THEY HAVE BEEN CONDUCTED ARE MOST REMARK-ABLE AND GIVE TESTIMONY TO THE VAST CHANGES WHICH HAVE OCCURED IN SPAIN'S SOCIAL FABRIC SINCE THE CIVIL WAR. THEY SUGGEST THAT THE SPANISH PEOPLE, PERHAPS MORE THAN SOME OF THE POLITICAL ELISTES, ARE READY DEMOCRACY. REPORTS

FROM ALL OVER SPAIN, INCLUDING FROM OUR CONSULATES AND FROM EMBOFFS WHO HAVE TRAVELLED WIDELY IN RECENT DAYS, COINCIDE THAT THE CAMPAIGN HAS BEEN REMARKABLE FREE OF INCIDENTS BETWEEN PARTIES. IN MADRID, RIGHT WING AND, TO A LESSER EXTENT, LEFT WING TROOPS HAVE OCCASIONALLY ROUGHED UP CAMPAIGN WORKERS, BUT INCREASED POLICE VIGILANCE HAS KEPT THE UGLY STUFF FROM SPREADING.

3. THE TERRORISTS ARE A THING APART, SMALL GROUPS OF VIOLENT MEN, SOME CLEARLY OF THE EXTREME LEFT (E.G. THE BASQUE ETA) OTHERS POSSIBLY OF EITHER LEFT OR RIGHT, BUT ALL HOPING THAT VIOLENCE WILL DESTABILIZE THE DEMOCRATIC PROCESS. MORE MAY COME TODAY OR TOMORROW, BUT IF THE DECEMBER REFERENDUM IS ANY GUIDE THE CHIEF EFFECT MIGHT BE TO INCLINE UNDECIDED VOTERS TOWARDS SUPPORTING SUAREZ'S POSITION, THOUGH THE LAW-AND-ORDER MOTIF OF THE FRAGA-LED ALIANZA POPULAR MIGHT ALSO BENEFIT.

4. EVEN THE RHETORIC, PARTICULARLY BY SPANISH STANDARDS, HAS BEEN RESTRAINED, WITH THE NOTABLE EXCEPTION OF THE MUTUAL RECRIMINATIONS BETWEEN THE ALIANZA POPULAR AND MOST OF THE OTHER PARTIES. IN PART, THIS SEEMS TO BE BECAUSE THE POPULACE TENDS TO REACT AGAINST INTEMPERATE ATTACKS ON OTHERS, SOMETHING THAT MAY HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO THE DECLINE OF THE AP. ON THE OTHER HAND, THE PARTY RHETORIC HAS NOT BEEN NOTED FOR CLARITY OF POLITICAL THOUGHT, THE PLATFORMS ARE ALMOST INDISTINGUISHABLE, REGARDLESS OF THE PARTY, POSITION ON THE POLITICAL SPECTRUM (LEADING SOME COMMENTATORS TO DUB THE COM-
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PAGE 03 MADRID 04492 01 OF 02 131629Z

MUNIST LEADER "FRIAR CARRILLO"). ALL TALK OF LOFTY GOALS BUT LITTLE ABOUT HOW TO GET THERE.

5. IN THE CIRCUMSTANCES, THE VOTER SEEMS MOST LIKELY TO FIND HIS MOTIVATION ELSEWHERE THAN IN SPECIFIC ISSUES, MAKING HIS CHOICE ON PERSONALITIES (PARTICULARLY NATIONAL LEADERS LIKE SUAREZ, GONZALEZ AND FRAGA BUT ALSO ON LOCAL REPUTATIONS) AND ON THE VOTER'S PERCEPTION OF WHERE HE BELONGS AMONG BROAD POLITICAL TENDENCIES PLUS, IN SOME INSTANCES, PEER GROUP PRESSURES.

6. THE AMERICAN STYLE CAMPAIGN OF THE SOCIALIST, GONZALEZ, HAS BEEN PARTICULARLY EFFECTIVE (AND THE EVOCATIONS OF THE PAST OF THE ALIANZA POPULAR PARTICULARLY INEFFECTIVE). BUT IT WAS SUAREZ'S DECISION TO STAND FOR OFFICE AS THE LEADER OF THE UCD THAT GAVE DECISIVE SHAPE TO THIS CAMPAIGN. IT PUT THE CENTRIST COALITION INTO BEING AND INTO THE LEAD, EVEN THOUGH ITS LONG TERM COHESIVENESS IS UNCERTAIN AND IT DEFLATED THE

ALREADY SAGGING AP BALLOON. COVERSELY, BECAUSE OF THE ISOLATION OF THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS AND THE INTRODUCTION INTO THE CENTER'S LISTS OF NUMBERS OF CANDIDATES IDENTIFIED IN THE PAST WITH THE FRANCO REGIME APPARATUS, IT MAY HAVE CONTRIBUTED SOMEWHAT TO THE SURGE OF THE SOCIALISTS BY ATTRACTING SOMETHING OF A MODERATE LEFT PROTEST VOTE.

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PAGE 01 MADRID 04492 02 OF 02 131616Z
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 MADRID 4492

USEEC

7. IN THE REFERENDUM, THE PEOPLE SPOKE WITH ALMOST ONE VOICE, IN A ZERO SUM DECISION ABOUT THE FUTURE SPANISH POLITICAL SYSTEM. NOW THEY WILL SPEAK WITH MANY VOICES. EVEN SO THE POLITICAL PANORAMA AFTER THE ELECTIONS WILL BE VASTLY SIMPLIFIED FROM THE 200 ODD POLITICAL PARTIES THAT ONCE COMPETED FOR THE SUN. IN THE MAIN, ONE PERCEIVES THE WORKING OUT IN THE ELECTION OF THE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THREE GROSS VOTER TENDENCIES:

--THE CONSERVATIVE CONSTITUENCY (CENTER RIGHT AND
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PAGE 02 MADRID 04492 02 OF 02 131616Z

RIGHT) THAT WILL DIVIDE BETWEEN THE AP AND SUAREZ'S
CENTER.

--THE LEFT CONSTITUTENCY THAT WILL DIVIDE ITS
VOTE AMONG GONZALEZ'S PSOE, THE SOCIALIST SPLINTER PSP AND THE
COMMUNISTS.

--A FLOATING NON-IDEOLOGIC CONSTITUENCY RANGING
FROM CENTER RIGHT TO CENTER LEFT WHICH WOULD OIKELY
MOSTLY VOTE FOR THE UCD, BUT ALSO FOR CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS
AND EVEN THE PSOE OR THE PSP.

8. SMALL SPLINTERS OF THE EXTREME LEFT, EXTREME RIGHT
AND EVEN OF CENTRIST PERSUASION WILL GET FEW IF ANY
SEATS. ONLY IN THE BASQUE COUNTRY AND CATALUNYA WILL
REGIONAL GROUPS--SOME AFFILIATED NATIONALLY--MAKE
IMPORTANT SHOWINGS. THE EXISTENCE OF THE FLOATING
CONSTITUENCY OFFERS SOME EXPLANATION FOR THE FAIRLY
LARGE NUMBER OF UNDECIDED THAT MOST BUT NOT ALL POLLS
SHOW. SUAREZ'S TV APPEAL TODAY WILL BE CALCULATED
TOWARDS THE FLOATING VOTE. (A NUMBER OF "UNDECIDEDS"
MAY HAVE ACTUALLY MADE UP THEIR MINDS BUT HAVE NO
INTENTION OF TELING ANYONE, REMEMBERING SPANISH HISTORY,
AN EXPLANATION THAT SUAREZ HIMSELF REPORTEDLY SHARES.)

9. THE VOTE WILL BE HONEST. THE GOVERNMENT IS TOTALLY
SINCERE IN THIS AND THE SYSTEM OF POLL WATCHERS AND
COUNTING IS UNIVERSALLY ACCEPTED AS FAIR AND HEDGED WITH
AMPLE SAFEGUARDS. IT IS AS MUCH IN THE GOVERNMENT'S
INTEREST, SEEKING LEGITIMACY FOR THE DEMOCRATIC SYSTEM,
TO ASSURE ACCEPTANCE OF THE ELECTORAL PROCESS THOUGH
AN HONEST ELECTION AS IT IS IN THE INTERESTS OF SUAREZ'S
OPPONENTS. RESULTS WILL BE MADE AVAILABLE QUICKLY--IF
THE COMPUTER SYSTEM DOESN'T BREAK DOWN--TO DAMPEN SPECU-
LATION AND REDUCE THE OPPORTUNITY FOR ANY CHARGES OF
MANIPULATION.

10. AT ANOTHER LEVEL, THE GOS HAS IN GOOD MEASURE MET
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PAGE 03 MADRID 04492 02 OF 02 131616Z

OPPOSITION CONCERNS THAT THE GOVERNMENT WOULD USE ITS
POWER TO MANIPULATE VOTER BEHAVIOR. IN CONTRAST TO THE
GLOOMY PREDICTIONS OF OPPOSITION FIGURES, LOCAL CIVIL
AUTHORITITES HAVE PROVIDED UNFETTERED ACCESS TO MEETING
SITES FOR ALL. THE WALLS OF SPAIN HAVE BECOME THE

PROPERTY OF EVERY POLITICAL PARTY'S POSTERS AND THE GOVERNMENT CONTROLLED RADIO AND TV HAS BEEN SATURATED WITH EQUAL TIME POLITICAL ANNOUNCEMENTS, OVERWHELMING THE MODEST ADVANTAGE GIVEN TO GOVERNMENT ACTIVITY SHOWN ON THE NEWS BROADCASTS. THERE IS ONE AREA FOR COMPLAINT, THE USE OF GOVERNMENT RESOURCES ON BEHALF OF THE UCD. WE HAVE HEARD OF ONE CASE (OFFICIAL SYNDICATE--SSO OFFICERS BEING USED TO RUN OFF UCD CAMPAIGN MATERIAL). THERE MAY BE OTHERS BUT WE HAVE NOT HEAD THIS IS A GENERAL PRACTICE. POSSIBLY LONG TIME APPARATCHIKS HAVE SIMPLY TAKEN FOR GRANTED THAT SCRUPLES SHOULD BE LIMITED, BUT NONETHELSS PARTIES THAT HAVE NOT DONE WELL COULD CRY FOUL, NOR DO WE DISCOUNT THE POSSIBILITY OF SCATTERED LOCAL VOTE BUYING BY MORE THAN ONE PARTY'S CADRES. LASTLY, THE WITHHOULDING FROM THE PUBLIC (AND OTHER POLITICAL PARTIES) OF THE POLITICAL DATA AMASSED BY GOVERNMENT POLLSTERS HAS LED TO CONSIDERABLE, JUSTIFIABLE CRITICISM. BUT ALL IN ALL, THE ELECTIONS MUST BE CONSIDERED A FREE EXPRESSION OF THE POPULAR WILL.

11. WE WILL DISCUSS IN SEPTELS POST-ELECTORAL COALTION CONTINGENCIES AND THE POTENTIAL IMPACT ON OUR INTERESTS OF THE SPANISH ELECTIONS. CERTAINLY, SUAREZ'S APPROACH TO THE POST-ELECTORAL PARLIAMENTARY SITUATION WILL DEPEND IN SOME MEASURE UPON THE SIZE OF HIS PLURALITY. THE VERY FACT OF FREE, PEACEFUL ELECTIONS IN CRUCIAL TO THE PARAMOUNT U.S. INTEREST IN A DEMOCRATIC SPAIN THAT CAN TAKE HER PLACE IN EUROPE BUT THE INTERPLAY BETWEEN CERTAIN SPECIFIC INTERESTS AND THE EMERGING PARLIAMENTARY GAME COULD PROVE TROUBLESOME. STABLER

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